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INSIDE

In State of the Union Speech, Bush Urges U.S. Global Engagement

President Bush urged the United States to engage the international community as a means of building prosperity, security, freedom and hope around the world in his State of the Union address to the U.S. Congress and the American people.

Speaking at the U.S. Capitol January 31, Bush said that in the "decisive year" of 2006, the United States must choose to exercise leadership in the world in order to secure peace and protect its citizens.



President Bush is applauded as he arrives to deliver his State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress, January 31, 2006. (Pablo Martinez Monsivais/Pool/Reuters)

The only way to protect our people ... the only way to secure the peace ... the only way to control our destiny is by our leadership – so the United States of America will continue to lead," Bush said.

Recalling U.S. global involvement in the 20th century, such as its fight against fascism and genocide in World War II, and its support for democracies during the Cold War, Bush said the United States "rejects the false comfort of isolationism."

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"In a complex and challenging time, the road of isolationism and protectionism may seem broad and inviting – yet it ends in danger and decline.

U.S. Adds \$2 Million to Help Drought-Affected Areas

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Coretta Scott King Dead at 78

By Michael Jay Friedman
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King Jr. and his partner in championing civil rights, justice and equality, died January 30 in Baja Cali-



fornia, Mexico. She was 78.

"I think on many points she educated me," King once said of the woman who accompanied him on the whirlwind journey from an Alabama ministry to the center of a global

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In State of the Union Speech, Bush Urges U.S. Global Engagement . . .

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Assuring both friends and enemies that the United States “will not retreat from the world,” and “will never surrender to evil,” Bush said that the United States accepts “the call of history to deliver the oppressed, and move this world toward peace.”

The president said his administration “is committed to an historic, long-term goal – we seek the end of tyranny in our world.” Dictatorships fuel resentment and radicalism, shelter terrorists, and seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction, he said.

“Democracies replace resentment with hope, respect the rights of their citizens and their neighbors, and join the fight against terror,” he said.

Repeating U.S. support for democratic reform in the Middle East, Bush said democracy requires not only elections, but also “the rule of law, protection of minorities, and strong, accountable institutions that last longer than a single vote.”

The president against called upon the new Palestinian leaders in Hamas to recognize Israel, disarm their militias, reject terrorism, and to work for lasting peace.

On Iran, he repeated U.S. and international opposition to allowing the country to obtain nuclear weapons, but told the people of Iran that the United States respects them and their country, as well as their right to win their own freedom, saying the United States “hopes one day to be the closest

of friends with a free and democratic Iran.”

Bush vowed to stay on the offensive against terrorists and insurgents around the world, including those in Afghanistan and Iraq, saying the United States “cannot find security by abandoning our commitments and retreating within our



President Bush after delivering his State of the Union address. (Jonathan Ernst/Reuters)

borders,” since that would “simply move the battlefield to our own shores.”

He said the ultimate path to defeating terrorists and their ideology will be to offer “the hopeful alternative of political freedom and peaceful change.”

Bush said the United States also must show compassion by encouraging economic progress, fighting diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, and “spreading hope in hopeless lands.”

“Regions overwhelmed by poverty, corruption, and despair are sources of terrorism, organized crime, human trafficking, and the drug trade,” he said.

Bush, rejecting economic isolationism, warned against complacency even though the American economy is “pre-eminent.” He reminded his audience that the global economy is dynamic and the United States has new competitors such as India and China.

Protectionism, high taxes and measures discouraging immigration are “forms of economic retreat,” he said, and “lead in the same direction – toward a stagnant and second-rate economy.”

At the beginning of his speech, the president paid tribute to civil rights leader Coretta Scott King who died earlier in the day, saying she “called America to its founding ideals and carried on a noble dream.”

Saying the United States is “addicted to oil,” the president proposed an advanced energy initiative intended to increase funding for technological research into alternative power sources and cleaner, more fuel-efficient automobiles.

Bush also proposed the American Competitiveness Initiative, designed to give U.S. schoolchildren more education and grounding in mathematics and science. ♦

Transcript of President Bush's 2006 State of the Union Address and related articles are available at (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/stateoftheunion/2006/index.html>)

Coretta Scott King Dead at 78 . . .

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civil rights movement, and who, after his death, would carry on his work through a variety of educational, political and philanthropic activities.

Speaking on behalf of a mourning nation, President Bush praised King's "lasting contributions to freedom and equality." Her efforts, the president said, "have made America a better and more compassionate nation."

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice lauded King as "one of the pioneers in our country's fight for equality and justice for all its citizens" and praised her "selfless dedication to the good of all Americans."

EARLY LIFE

Born on April 27, 1927, in the two-room house built by her father in segregated Perry County, Alabama, Coretta Scott picked cotton and worked as a maid while studying piano and voice at a local private missionary secondary school. Graduating first in her class, she then attended Antioch College in Ohio, where an older sister was the first African-American student.

After graduation, Scott won a fellowship to the New England Conservatory of Music. She trained as a classical singer and paid her expenses by cleaning houses and working as a mail order clerk.

Martin Luther King Jr. was then a doctoral student in theology at nearby Boston University. Introduced by a friend to Coretta Scott, King apparently believed he had found his future wife on the first

date, telling Scott, as she later recalled, "You know, you have everything I ever wanted in a woman. We ought to get married someday."

King's formal proposal came a year later, but Scott pondered it another six months before accepting. The two were married by King's father, the Reverend Martin Luther King Sr., in June 1953. Scott required that her father-in-law omit from the wedding vows the promise to "obey" her husband.

A LIFE OF SERVICE

Although Coretta King might have expected a comfortable life as the wife of a respected young minister, events swiftly propelled the couple to the forefront of civil rights activism. Martin Luther King Jr. had accepted a pulpit in Montgomery, Alabama. With the December 1955 arrest of Rosa Parks (<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2005/Oct/31-56631.html>) for refusing to relinquish her seat on a segregated public bus, the community turned to King for leadership during what became known as the Montgomery Bus Boycott (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/Archive/2005/Dec/01-804080.html>).

Coretta King determined that she, too, would be active in the civil rights struggle, indeed possibly more than her husband at times might have preferred. In 1956, the King home was firebombed, but Coretta King continued as a full partner in her husband's work, speaking out and participating in civil rights demonstrations, including the 1965 march from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery that gar-

nered support for passage of the federal Voting Rights Act. Putting her training to work, Coretta Scott King organized and performed at numerous "Freedom Concerts," where she sang, lectured and read poetry to raise funds for civil rights activism.

When Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, on April 4, 1968, his wife felt compelled to carry on his work, writing in her 1969 autobiography *My Life with Martin Luther King Jr.*, "Because his task was not finished, I felt that I must re-dedicate myself to the completion of his work."

King had been shot as he led support for striking Memphis, Tennessee, garbage workers. Even before his funeral, King's wife took his place at the strikers' head. Two months later, she appeared at the Lincoln Memorial, site of his "I Have A Dream" speech. Addressing the Poor People's Campaign, she asked American women to unite "to fight the three great evils of racism, poverty and war."

Later that year, Coretta King founded and served for many years as chief operating officer of the Atlanta-based Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change. This "official living memorial" to the advancement of King's legacy attracts more than 650,000 visitors annually and utilizes modern communications media to educate the world's peoples about the Nobel Prize winner's life, work and philosophy and his methods of nonviolent conflict-reconciliation and social change.

Mrs. King continued to devote her talents and energies to a di-

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United States Adds \$2 Million to Help Drought-Affected Areas

Addis Ababa (U.S. Embassy) – In response to the drought in the southern zone of Somali region and the Borena and Bale zones of Oromiya, the United States, through the United States Agency for International Development, has added \$2 million in funding to its existing, substantial food-assistance program.

"I have visited areas already affected by this drought, and I know what a crucial factor time is in responding to the needs it creates. I am happy that the U.S. is able to respond quickly and effectively with these additional funds," said the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires, Ambassador Vicki Huddleston.

The U.S. is already providing assistance for food distribution, nutrition interventions, measles vaccinations, and, through its \$29.2 million Pastoralist Livelihood Initiative, help to both de-stock affected animals and protect breeding herds. This additional support will allow USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance to provide an

immediate response in areas of Ethiopia affected by this regional drought, combining it with all available resources to increase water, health, and nutrition interventions.

The current drought in the Horn of Africa has resulted in an urgent need to save lives and support livelihoods, with more than 1.5 million people living in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas of Ethiopia affected. Populations in southern Somali and Oromiya regions have been severely affected by the failure of the October-December rains. Additional rains are not expected until late March or early April; even then, long-term meteorological forecasts are predicting that they will be poor.

Immediate needs include water provision for affected communi-



ties, nutritional assessments and responses for badly affected children, food assistance, and health programs against diseases such as measles, a major killer in previous droughts in the area.

Pastoralist communities have been hard hit by loss of traditional livestock markets. Interventions are being

supported to address pastoral livelihoods in both the short and long-term. Pastoralists' main coping mechanism in times of poor rainfall is migration to neighbouring areas, where rainfall (and therefore pasture and water) is more plentiful. The current drought is affecting populations across the region, and, increasing the potential for conflict as pastoralists are moving out of traditional migration areas. There have already been movements of herders and animals from Kenya and Somalia, for example, into Ethiopia. ♦

Coretta Scott King Dead at 78 . . .

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verse range of social causes. She joined the boards of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the National Organization for Women, supported numerous international human rights campaigns and supplied the driving force behind the movement to establish the Martin Luther King national holiday (<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2006/Jan/11-901573.html>), first observed in 1986.

Coretta Scott King, who held approximately 60 honorary degrees,

was the author and/or editor of several books and the namesake of the American Library Association's Coretta Scott King Award, which honors African-American writers and illustrators and celebrates the African-American experience through artistic expression.

Mrs. King's public appearances were constrained by an August 2005 heart attack and stroke. She did attend a January 14 Atlanta dinner honoring her husband, where she received a standing ovation.

Coretta Scott King is survived by four children: Yolanda Denise King, Martin Luther King III, Dexter Scott King and the Rev. Bernice Albertine King.

For information on the U.S. civil rights movement, see African-American Rights (http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/history_geography_and_population/civil_rights/african_american_rights.html). ♦

Ambassador Speaks at Business Lunch

On Thursday, January 26, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Ambassador Vicki Huddleston was among the speakers at the monthly meeting of the Ethio-American Business Community Association. Her remarks, on the theme of Mapping Africa in 2020 – The Challenge Ahead, surveyed the domestic and international challenges facing Ethiopia’s business community.

The Ambassador congratulated the group on their work in developing Ethiopia’s economy and encouraged them to continue their efforts to “leapfrog Ethiopia over the roadblocks and onto the highway that leads to prosperity, peace, and durable democracy.”

The text of the Ambassador’s remarks (as prepared for delivery) follows.

Remarks by the
Chargé d’Affaires
to the Ethio-American Business
Community Association
Thursday, January 26, 2005

Mapping Africa in 2020 -- The
Challenge Ahead

I am delighted that you have invited me to speak with you today. I am particularly pleased to be here with Ato Tesfaye Birru of the Ethiopian Telecommunications sector, because technology may be the single most important factor in determining whether Ethiopia – like

other developing countries – moves into a prosperous 21st century. Let me make the case for adopting policies that nurture technology and investment in Ethiopia’s future.

The National Intelligence Council’s 2020 project, “Mapping the Global Future” – the pre-eminent study on predicting the future, concludes

world economy will continue to grow impressively – it may be 80 percent larger in 2020 than in 2000, the disparities between the “haves” and “have nots” will widen. This – alas – is especially true for sub-Saharan Africa. Poverty, unemployment, disease, poor educational levels, instability and problems of governance are road blocks that keep Ethiopia and most

of sub-Saharan Africa off the access road that leads to the superhighway of sustained development.

But countries and groups can find ways to go over – go around – or go through these barriers. Don’t tune out – these barriers can be addressed as much by you as by your government. Let me cite the ex-

perts. The “Mapping the Global Future” study concludes that: “the greatest benefits of globalization will accrue to countries and groups that can access and adopt new technologies. Indeed, a nation’s level of technological achievement generally will be defined in terms of its investment in integrating and applying the new, globally available technologies.”

Countries that fail to take advantage of these technologies will generally find themselves among



Ambassador Huddleston (third from left) with members of the EABCA

that: “The very magnitude and speed of change resulting from a globalizing world will be a defining feature of the world out to 2020.”

The overarching challenge will be the impact of globalization – our growing interconnectedness reflected in the expanded flows of information, technology, capital, goods, services and people throughout the world. This overarching “mega-trend” is a force so ubiquitous that it will substantially shape all the other major trends in the world of 2020. Although the

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Ambassador Speaks at Business Lunch . . .

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those countries that are in the rut on the side of the highway to Successful globalization. These “have nots” will only become “haves” – will only push the roadblocks aside – when they pursue policies that support the application of new technologies – such as good governance, universal education, and market reform. The global 2020 study tells us that Ethiopia – and other developing countries – can leapfrog intermediate stages that the U.S. and Europe had to traverse – if they pursue such policies.

“China and India are well positioned to become technology leaders, and even the poorest countries will be able to leverage prolific, cheap technologies to fuel -- although at a slower rate -- their own development.”

What an incredible incentive for you and for Africa to adopt policies that attract technology through good governance, universal education, and market reform! Make no mistake: with the right conditions on the ground, investment will flow to Africa. According to the World Bank, the private sector invested \$230 billion in telecommunications infrastructure in the developing world between 1993 and 2003. Africa and Ethiopia must gain a greater share of this investment. To do so your nation and the region must face the enormous challenges of the 21st century:

Religious extremism and identity politics: political Islam and ethnic tensions rally disaffected individuals and groups, generating conflict and separatist tendencies;

The youth bulge: if young men and women have no future, then

their country has no future.

Organized crime: traffic in women and illegal migration degrades and corrupts Africa’s human potential.

The threat of pandemics and environmental disasters, such as the HIV-AIDS crisis and environmental disasters such as the drought in southern Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya.

Regional instability: fostered by poverty, disease, and weak commitment to peace processes.

And these are only a few of the economic, cultural, and political convulsions that Ethiopia and the developing world will face as they compete to leapfrog the barriers to sustained development. But there is hope, for Africa and for Ethiopia. I have been impressed with your focus and organization, and with your country’s commitment to universal education, improved health care, and broadened democracy. These successes, combined with policy reforms, could leapfrog Ethiopia over the roadblocks and onto the highway that leads to prosperity, peace, and durable democracy. According to “Mapping the Global Future,” the states that will benefit from the growing world economy are those which:

First of all, bring an end to conflict, improve governance, rein in corruption, and establish the rule of law. These actions allow for the expansion of foreign investment. If this investment is used to help economies grow – providing avenues to wealth other than through the power of the state – the prospect of better lives will help governments mitigate the myriad of challenges posed by globalization.

Second, expand the development of existing and new sources of wealth through economic reform and good governance – that of course means attracting new technologies, creating jobs and expanding opportunities. Ethiopia has the ability to feed itself and to become a major exporter of agricultural and animal products.

Third, quicken democratic reform in order to more effectively deal with the challenges posed by criminal networks, terrorism, and internal dissent.

Fourth, take greater initiative in negotiating new aid and trade relationships. Move forward on entering the World Trade Organization and making use of trade and investment advantages under the African Growth and Opportunity Act. Use the new partnership for Africa’s Development – NEPAD – to your maximum advantage.

Fifth, leadership, the ultimate wild card, makes a huge positive difference. Good leadership at all levels – in government, in the opposition, in civil society, in business and commerce – promotes democracy, development, and stability that will nurture investment in Africa and in Ethiopia..

These are the challenges. Ethiopia must be among the “haves.” Your long and illustrious history, your pride, and your commitment to lead your nation do not permit you to fail. ♦

Latin Jazz at the National Theatre

On Saturday, January 28, the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa hosted an evening of jazz featuring Annette A. Aguilar and Stringbeans, a gifted quartet of American musicians visiting Ethiopia as part of the Department of State's American Music Abroad program. During the concert, which took place at the historic Ethiopian National Theatre, the visiting artists were joined by Ethio-jazz legend Mulatu Astatke, while the Theatre's folkloric ensemble provided a thrilling glimpse of Ethiopia's traditional music and dance. The U.S. Chargé d'Affaires, Ambassador

Vicki Huddleston, welcomed the more than 700 concertgoers, while Ethiopian Minister of Culture and Tourism Mohamoud Dirir reminded the audience of the African roots of jazz, thanking the ensemble for bringing their music "back home." In performance, Stringbeans blends Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian rhythms with the improvisational spirit of jazz.

The Stringbeans 2006 tour includes stops in Kenya, Tanzania, and Madagascar, as well as Ethiopia. In addition to the National Theatre concert, during their time

in Ethiopia the group performed at the Yared School of Music, discussed the challenges of being a professional musician with a group of young Ethiopian performers, and jammed with jazz aficionados at a local club. American Music Abroad is presented in partnership with the prestigious Jazz at Lincoln Center program; it provides top-quality jazz musicians and groups to selected embassies around the world. ♦



Mulatu Astatke (right) Joins in at the National Theater



The Ensemble Performs with the Three Brothers at the Jazz Village



The Ensemble Performs at the Jazz Village

U.N. Security Council Wants African Great Lakes Summit

By Judy Aita
Washington File United Nations
Correspondent

United Nations -- The U.N. Security Council January 27 encouraged the countries of the Great Lakes region of Africa to consolidate and intensify their efforts to establish peace, security and stability in the region, which has experienced some of the worst atrocities in recent history.

In a resolution adopted after a daylong ministerial level meeting, the Security Council called on the organizers of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region to make final preparations for holding the summit, which was postponed in December 2005. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged that the summit be scheduled quickly to send a strong and much needed signal that the peace process is still on track.

The meeting was proposed by Tanzania, which holds the presidency of the Security Council for January, in hopes of keeping the international community involved in promoting peace, stability and human rights in the region. Thirteen foreign ministers participated.

Tanzania Ambassador Augustine Mahiga said that the ministerial-level meeting was "an opportunity to encourage the countries of the region to continue in the process of good neighborliness and sustainable peace and to capitalize on very positive developments in the

region especially in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)."

"This is an opportunity to examine the extent to which the Security Council can forge closer relationships in areas of conflict resolution, peacekeeping and now peacebuilding," Mahiga said.



U.S. PRAISE FOR BURUNDI, DRC, RWANDA, UGANDA

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Donald Yamamoto underlined the United States commitment to sustain political and economic development in the fragile states in the Great Lakes region and commended the work of the Tripartite Plus One Commission.

"The United States commends in the highest terms the Governments and the people of Burundi, the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda for their faith, trust, dedication, and commitment to work together in the Tripartite Plus One Commis-

sion," Yamamoto said. "Each of these four countries are making a difference not only for their own people but in preparing for a more secure and prosperous Great Lakes region."

"We call on this body to continue to invigorate its leadership and cooperation in ensuring a peaceful and secure [Democratic Republic of] Congo after the elections this year, for a new and vibrant Burundi, to support the struggles against the negative forces which Rwanda faces every day, as well as the struggles and challenges faced by Uganda," the deputy secretary said.

Yamamoto asked the international community to renew and dedicate its efforts to meet the needs of refugees and the internally displaced.

"Over 425,000 refugees and a larger number of internally displaced persons underscore for us the unfinished task which lies before us in the Great Lakes region," he said.

Many of the 45 speakers cited the region as prime case for the new U.N. Peacebuilding Commission, which was established by the General Assembly in December 2005 to coordinate the resources of the international community to advise and propose strategies for reconstruction, institution building and sustainable development in countries emerging from conflict. The council is currently being organized and its 31 members selected.

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U.S. Condemns Attack on Sudanese Village and Police Convoy

The United States condemns the Sudan Liberation Army's attacks on the village of Golo and a police convoy in West Darfur on January 23, which killed and wounded a large number of Sudanese Armed Forces personnel.

In a written statement released January 25, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack called the attacks "unwarranted and violations of the cease-fire agreement. Their perpetrators must be held accountable," he said.

McCormack went on to "commend the African Union Mission in Sudan for its response in both of these incidents, particularly its assistance to humanitarian workers caught in the midst of the fighting."

Despite the presence of 7,000 African Union (AU) peacekeepers, violence has continued in Darfur. An estimated 180,000 people have died, according to news reports, and another 2 million have been displaced to refugee camps since rebels began fighting the Sudanese government and Arab militiamen three years ago.

A cease-fire agreement reached in May 2003 is not holding. Another round of AU-sponsored peace talks has concluded in Abuja, Nigeria, but attacks continue and the hu-

manitarian situation steadily is deteriorating.

For additional information, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>).

Following is the text of McCormack's statement:

(begin text)



Heavily armed Sudanese rebels in southern Darfur, November 18, 2005. Worsening violence in Sudan's Darfur needs an urgent international response, but the fear is that help will again arrive late, a top United Nations human rights envoy said on Thursday. REUTERS/Mohamed Nureldin

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
January 25, 2006
Statement by Sean McCormack,
Spokesman

Violence in Darfur

The United States condemns the Sudan Liberation Army's attacks on the village of Golo and a police convoy in West Darfur on January

23, which killed and wounded a large number of Sudanese Armed Forces personnel.

These attacks were unwarranted and violations of the cease-fire agreement. Their perpetrators must be held accountable.

We commend the African Union Mission in Sudan for its response in both of these incidents, particularly its assistance to humanitarian workers caught in the midst of the fighting.

The United States calls on all the parties to cooperate fully with the African Union, abide by the ceasefire, and adhere to UN Security Council resolutions and the terms of the humanitarian and security protocols they promised to uphold. The United States is firmly committed to peace in Sudan. Only a political solution can bring durable peace and resolution of the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. We urge the Government of Sudan and the rebels to negotiate seriously at the peace talks in Abuja to achieve a peaceful settlement.

(end text)

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

Millennium Aid Agency Becoming More Assertive, Chief Says

By Kathryn McConnell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is becoming more "assertive" in working with countries to help them develop and implement effective proposals for its aid funds, MCC's chief executive officer says.

To further assist countries that might apply for funding, MCC January 24 issued guidelines to help ensure that countries propose development projects that comply with environmental regulatory requirements, said John Danilovich.

The MCC, a U.S. government corporation designed to help poor countries achieve sustainable economic development, is based on the principle that aid is most effective when it reinforces sound political, economic and social policies. The MCC administers the funds appropriated to the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA).

Although MCC will work with countries that are "serious about reducing poverty," it will not grant aid to a country if it wavers from its proposed goals or if it continues to suffer from "corruption, poor governance and instability," Danilovich said.

"We will not hesitate to say 'no' or 'no more'" to a country, Danilovich said January 23 at the American Enterprise Institute, a Washington-based policy research group.

As an example of its ability to say no, Danilovich said that MCC decided to postpone sending a pro-

ject-evaluation team to Gambia because of deterioration in Gambia's human-rights and political situations.

MCC conducts this examination process with all countries that it has determined are eligible for funding consideration.

The corporation also delayed its decision to approve MCA funding for Armenia based on concerns about reported "irregularities" during the country's November 2005 constitutional referendum, according to MCC.

Consistent with its practice of working with countries to help them understand the MCA grant proposal process, the agency suggested to the president of Armenia "corrective steps" his government could take to regain the MCC's confidence. On January 18, MCC said it would recommend to the MCC board approval of Armenia's request for funding to improve its agricultural water infrastructure, and for technical assistance and credit support.

Danilovich spoke just prior to traveling to Morocco and Benin, which have both submitted proposals for MCA funding. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=January&x=20060123171333WCyeroC0.3181421&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>).)

NEW ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATOR EXPECTED IN 2006

In addition to the environmental guidelines, MCC is expected in

2006 to add to its list of country performance "indicators" one pertaining to the effective management of natural resources.

MCC uses indicators -- or qualifying standards -- developed with measurements from independent institutions such as Transparency International, Freedom House and the World Bank, to determine if a country is eligible to apply for its funding for multiyear projects. There currently are 16 indicators grouped into three categories: ruling justly, investing in people and economic freedom, according to the agency.

A standard highlighting environmental protection could be incorporated into an existing indicator, Danilovich said.

The current indicators, which have evolved since the MCC became operational in early 2004, are "solid" ways to determine the degree to which a country's political, social and economic policies serve to promote broad-based sustainable economic development, Danilovich said.

EMPOWERING POOR COUNTRIES

Danilovich said MCC's goal is to become an agency with expectations of "clear, measurable results [of its aid recipients] at the front end and with an exit strategy at the back end."

"The MCC is about ... empowering poor countries to grow out of the poverty trap," he said.

"We believe that a great many of the poor will thrive if they are pro-

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Millennium Aid Agency Becoming More Assertive . . .

(Continued from page 10)

vided access to economic systems and if wealth creation strategies are made available to them," he said.

The MCC currently is working with 23 "eligible" countries and 18 "threshold" countries, or countries that are close to being considered eligible to apply for funding. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/Archive/2005/Nov/09-949636.html>).)

The agency has signed and is implementing five compacts (funding agreements) -- with Madagascar, Honduras, Cape Verde, Nicaragua and Georgia -- and two threshold agreements-- with Burkina Faso and Malawi, Danilovich said.

He said three more compacts are close to completion and that more compacts and threshold agree-

ments are expected by the end of 2006.

During 2006, the agency will examine ways to increase its cooperation with the private sector to boost development efforts, Danilovich said.

The MCC is a "unique and excellent program which ... will help us as a nation to continue to entrench and deepen our democracy, create a vibrant society and ensure a better life for future generations," Jose Brito, Cape Verde ambassador to the United States, said at the same event.

In addition to the chief executive officer, the MCC is managed by a board of directors comprising the secretaries of State and Treasury, the U.S. trade representative, the administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development

(USAID) and four people from the private sector.

Danilovich's January 23 prepared remarks (http://www.mcc.gov/public_affairs/speeches/012306_JDD_2nd_anniversary_AEI.shtml) are available on the MCC Web site, as is the full text (http://www.mcc.gov/guidance/FY06/Environmental_Guidelines.pdf) of the environmental guidelines (PDF, 15 pages).

For additional information, see Millennium Challenge Account (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/mca.html).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)♦

U.N. Security Council Wants African Great Lakes Summit . . .

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BOTSWANA CALLS FOR COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE OF ASSISTANCE

Botswana Foreign Minister Mopoti Merafhe said that the immediate beneficiaries of peace are the people of the Great Lakes region who have borne the brunt of untold human suffering, but "any further delay in achieving durable peace in the Great Lakes can only condemn all of us in Africa to economic stagnation and the vicious cycle of violence and crises."

A comprehensive package of assistance would be the greatest peace dividend the international

community could provide in helping to consolidate a lasting political settlement, Merafhe said.

In its resolution, the Security Council urged the countries in the region to continue their collective efforts to promote good relations and peaceful coexistence; agree to confidence-building measures; and institutionalize respect for human rights, good governance, rule of law, democratic practices and development cooperation.

The council strongly condemned the activities of militias and armed groups in the region especially the Forces Democratique de Liberation du Rwanda (FDLR), the Palipehutu-

forces National de Liberation (FNL) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which continue to attack civilians and humanitarian personnel and threatens the stability of states in the region.

The Security Council also called on countries to enforce the arms embargo in the DRC and reiterated its demands that Uganda, Rwanda, the DRC and Burundi take measures to prevent their territories from being used by armed groups and militia in the region. ♦

U.S. Awards International Research and Education Grants

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded the first grants in its Partnership for International Research and Education (PIRE) program.

The grants vary in size and duration, but most are for about \$2.5 million over five years, according to a January 30 NSF press release. The grants pair researchers based at U.S. academic institutions with counterparts in universities in other countries, including South Africa, Chile, Japan, Ukraine and Germany.

"This NSF program is designed to enable U.S. scientists and engineers to build strong, long-lasting international research collaborations and to develop a new cadre of globally engaged U.S. scientists and engineers," said Kathryn Sullivan, acting director of NSF's Office of International Science and Engineering, which awarded the PIRE grants.

Nine of the 12 PIRE partnerships will link U.S. researchers and students with collaborators in multiple foreign countries.

The PIRE awards support projects in such areas as the formation of distant galaxies, nanoscience for clean drinking water, computer speech recognition and language translation, seismic activity in the Earth's mantle under Africa and plants and animals unique to Patagonia.

Examples of PIRE projects include:

Using information technology resources for distance learning, virtual transcontinental lab meetings

and international webcast seminars;

Developing international curriculum units for students who do not travel; and

Undertaking efforts to enhance public understanding of the international dimensions of science.

More information about PIRE awards (http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?



PIRE project scientists from the U.S. and Russia in the field at Russia's Mutnovsky Volcano

pims_id=12819) is available on the NSF Web site.

Text of the NSF press release follows:

NSF Awards First Partnership for International Research and Education Grants

Program aims to fortify international research collaborations and engage U.S. scientists and engineers

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded the first grants in its Partnership for International

Research and Education (PIRE) program. The grants range in size and duration, with most about \$2.5 million over five years. "At a time when scientific and engineering research is becoming increasingly global, this NSF program is designed to enable U.S. scientists and engineers to build strong, long-lasting international research collaborations and to develop a new cadre of globally engaged U.S. scientists and engineers," said Kathryn Sullivan, acting director of NSF's Office of International Science and Engineering, which awarded the PIRE grants.

"The PIRE awards are focused research projects that can only be successful with the collaboration of foreign partners," she said. "They provide strong international research experiences for U.S. students and post-docs, and provide new models for how universities can tap their many resources to become more international."

The PIRE awards support research across the entire spectrum of NSF-funded disciplines, with projects in such areas as the formation of distant galaxies, nanoscience for clean drinking water, computer speech recognition and language translation, patterns of learning by children of immigrants, seismic activity in the Earth's mantle under Africa, and plants and animals unique to Patagonia.

The competition is supported across NSF, with every NSF directorate contributing funds to at least one PIRE award. The geographic distribution of the PIRE col-

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State Department Delivers Updates on U.S. Foreign Policy

Washington -- Keeping up to date on the latest U.S. foreign policy developments now is easier than ever through a convenient e-mail newsletter. As President Bush prepares his January 31 State of the Union address and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice comments on recent Palestinian elections, now is the perfect time to subscribe to State Department's This Week From Washington.

Launched in November 2004, This Week From Washington (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Subscribe/usinfonews.html>) is delivered every Wednesday with the most significant news and developments in U.S. foreign policy. The e-mail newsletter, produced by the State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs, highlights top policy-related stories of

the previous week and delivers them directly to your e-mail inbox with links to the full articles and the full texts and transcripts of key documents.

Recent newsletters have included information on President Bush's meetings with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, as well as high-level State Department officials' travel to China, Sri Lanka, India and Japan.

Articles on efforts to improve U.S. visa policies, expand international education partnerships, reorganize foreign aid and the Rice-Chertoff joint vision for secure borders and open doors in the information age, provide insight and context to U.S. policies that affect the global community.

In the coming weeks, newsletters will include information on President Bush's State of the Union address; the London Conference on Afghanistan; and the U.S. presence at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Stay informed and start your subscription today. Subscribe (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Subscribe/usinfonews.html>) and view a sample newsletter (http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/newsletter01_11_2006.html) on the State Department's USINFO Web site.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

U.S. Awards International Research and Education Grants . . .

(Continued from page 12)

laborations is wide-ranging, with multiple partnerships funded to work in Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa. Nine of the 12 PIRE partnerships will link U.S. researchers and students with collaborators in multiple foreign countries.

PIRE projects are characterized by close integration of research and education, extensive student preparation for foreign experiences and strong mentoring during international research, as well as activities that will contribute to developing an international community of scholars at U.S. universities.

PIRE projects, for example:

Use IT resources for distance learning, virtual transcontinental lab meetings, and internationally webcast seminars.

Develop research, education and recruitment links with minority-serving institutions.

Take advantage of culture and language training to put scientific research in a cross-cultural context.

Combine scientific research training with a Peace Corps International Master's program.

Develop international curriculum units for students who do not travel.

Involve outreach to integrate international research findings into K-12 activities, including offering high-school students research internships in the PIRE laboratories.

Undertake efforts to enhance public understanding of the international dimensions of science.

The PIRE grants were made to Brigham Young University, Johns Hopkins University, Michigan State University, Michigan Technological University, Pennsylvania State University, Princeton University, Rice University, the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, the University of California at Santa Barbara, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the State University of New York at Albany, and the University of Rhode Island. ♦

Civil Liberties Key Component of Rule of Law

By Alexandra Abboud
Washington File Staff Writer

This article is the third in a series of three that explore the components of the rule of law.

The first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution collectively are called the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights outlines the individual rights guaranteed to each American citizen, including freedom of religion and freedom of speech. These rights have been a cornerstone of the rule of law in the United States because they protect citizens' fundamental right to freedom and liberty.

The original draft of the U.S. Constitution, which outlined the way in which the U.S. government would function, did not specifically include a section that outlined the rights of citizens. In 1791, through the work of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison and others, state delegates to the Constitutional Convention adopted the first 10 amendments to the Constitution. These amendments confirmed citizens' freedoms of religion, speech and the press, the right to peacefully assemble or protest, the right to form "a well-regulated militia" and bear arms and the right to a fair trial.

The Bill of Rights also provides for freedom from having property taken away unlawfully, from incriminating oneself and from unreasonable search and seizure.

Today, the fundamental freedoms outlined in the Bill of Rights repre-

sent the limits on what government can and cannot do to its citizens. These rights are referred to as civil liberties. And, although the scope of these protections still is debated in Supreme Court cases, civil liberties continue to be key components of the rule of law because they provide legal limits to government action and protect what the founders believed were Americans' fundamental rights.

FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

One of the most widely recognized civil liberties is freedom of

responsibilities and result in an informed and free society.

Throughout U.S. history, the Supreme Court has interpreted the First Amendment to include the freedom to engage in various forms of expression, even those forms that may be distasteful to many, including hurtful speech, and the burning of flags and religious symbols. The court's underlying principle has been that the right to freedom of speech and freedom of expression, and the ability to express one's opinions and beliefs freely are cornerstones of a democratic nation.

"The First Amendment serves not only the needs of the polity but also those of the human spirit — a spirit that demands self-expression," said Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall in *Procunier v. Martinez* (1974).

The First Amendment also protects freedom of the press, which, through Supreme Court decisions, has come to mean that government may not force newspapers to publish articles against their will, or stop newspaper reporters from attending and writing about legal proceedings. Further, the government cannot impose criminal or civil penalties on a newspaper that publishes true information about important public issues. These rights allow the press to play the important role of ensuring transparency in government actions.

Although the courts have ruled that there are certain limits on



speech. The First Amendment to the Constitution states that "Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech" and the freedom of the press. This civil liberty plays an important role in the protection of the rule of law because the personal freedom to criticize one's government openly and the freedom of the press to report on issues of public importance promote awareness of citizens' rights and

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Bush, Rice Say Palestinian Elections Show "Power of Democracy"

By Stephen Kaufman
Washington File White House Correspondent

Washington -- President Bush said the results of the January 25 Palestinian parliamentary elections present a "wake-up call" to the incumbent Fatah party leadership, reflecting voter dissatisfaction and a desire for change. However, he said HAMAS, which appears set to assume a clear majority in the 132-seat legislature, cannot be a "partner in peace" if its platform calls for the destruction of Israel.

The parliamentary elections mark the first time HAMAS has participated in national elections. Previously, the party has only fielded candidates in municipal elections. If preliminary indications are confirmed, HAMAS is set to end Fatah's domination of the legislature, which it has enjoyed since the previous parliamentary elections in 1996.

Speaking January 26 at a White House press conference, President Bush noted the high voter turnout and said the results "remind me about the power of democracy."

"Obviously, people, were not happy with the status quo. The people are demanding honest government. The people want services. They want to be able to raise their children in an environment in which they can get a decent education, and they can find health care. And so the elections should open the eyes of the old guard there in the Palestinian territories," he said.

The president said he welcomes the competition of ideas as signs of a healthy democratic system, but he expressed doubts that HAMAS can be a "partner in



President George W. Bush is seen during a news conference in the White House in Washington in this January 26, 2006 file photo. REUTERS/Larry Downing

peace" if it adheres to its political platform calling for the destruction of Israel and maintains its armed wing.

"We will watch very carefully about the formation of the government," Bush said, but I will continue to remind people about what I just said, that if your platform is the destruction of Israel, it means you're not a partner in peace, and we're interested in peace."

The president restated U.S. policy that "a political party that articulates the destruction of Israel

as part of its platform is a party with which we will not deal."

Bush also said he hoped Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas would remain in office.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice offered congratulations to President Abbas and the Palestinian people, and said, "Whenever you have 80 percent of the Palestinian people turn out in a free and fair election, one that is free of violence, it has to be a cause for hope."

In her videoconference remarks to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, she said the Palestinians "have apparently voted for change but we believe that their aspirations for peace and a peaceful life remain unchanged."

Rice said the Palestinians had endured governance "that was by all accounts not meeting their needs," particularly under the leadership of former President Yasser Arafat, which she said was "terribly corrupt."

But the secretary said the aspirations of the Palestinian people "can only be met through a two-state solution, which requires a renunciation of violence and turning away from terrorism, and accepting the right of Israel to exist, and the disarmament of militias."

The U.S. position on HAMAS has "not changed," she said. "[Y]ou cannot have one foot in politics and the other in terror."

Rice also called upon both the Palestinians and the international

(Continued on page 23)

Bush Urges Hamas To Renounce Threats to Israel

By Todd Bullock
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Hamas must renounce the part of its political platform that denies Israel the right to exist, according to President Bush.

"We want to work with a government that is a partner in peace, not a government whose declared intentions might be the destruction of Israel," Bush told the press January 30 after a meeting of his Cabinet.

Hamas, which has claimed responsibility for numerous attacks against Israeli civilians and military targets, has been designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department.

The president urged Hamas to disavow terrorism and "work to bring what you promised to the people of the Palestinian territories."

The Islamic militant group won 76 of the 132 seats in the Palestinian legislature during January 26 elections. The elections marked the first time Hamas participated in the political process.

"Hamas was out there campaigning on fighting corruption, and campaigning on providing essential social services to the people," White House press secretary Scott McClellan said during his January 30 press briefing. "I don't think Hamas was out there saying, 'We're going to destroy Israel.'"

The United States believes the Palestinian people and Israelis both want to live in freedom and peace, McClellan said, reaffirming U.S. support for a two-state plan.

"We have an opportunity to continue to advance peace in a troubled region, and that's what we will do," he said.

Echoing the president's remarks, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in a January 30 interview, "There is not much to talk about if there is a commitment to violence, particularly for a country like the United States that believes the war on terrorism is indivisible, that terrorism and violence are indistinguishable wherever you find them."

While the secretary acknowledged the Palestinian elections were successful, based on the large turnout of voters, she declared that their chosen leadership -- Hamas -- espouses terrorism.

Hamas, she said, "is going to have to make some difficult choices." She said the militant group inherits from the Palestinian government obligations that go back more than a decade to recognize the right of Israel to exist, to renounce violence, to disarm militias and to find a peaceful solution to the conflict with Israel.

"This is a time of evolution in the Middle East," Rice said. "It is a time when, I think, Middle Eastern states are going to have to come to terms with how Islam relates to open political systems. And that's much healthier than not having that debate."

Regarding U.S. aid, the secretary said the United States will consider on a case-by-case basis the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people. She said the United States cannot fund a Hamas-led govern-

ment because Hamas has been designated by the United States as a terrorist organization.

IRAN

Iran must give up its ambitions to develop nuclear weapons, Bush said. The president added that the United States is going to continue to work with "friends and allies" to present a united front for the Iranians.

"The other thing is that we want the people of Iran to be able to live in a free society," Bush said, adding he planned to discuss the issue directly in his January 31 State of the Union Address.

"This is a regime that has hid its activities from the international community for some two decades," McClellan said, "It is a regime that has refused to abide by its international obligations."

In a January 30 interview with Al-Arabiya TV, Rice said that the international community is in agreement that Iran should not have the means of developing a nuclear weapon.

While in London to attend a donors' meeting for Afghanistan, the secretary met with officials from the other four permanent members of the United Nations Security Council -- China, Britain, France and Russia -- to discuss the possibility of referring the Iranian nuclear issue to the U.N. Security Council. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Archive/2006/Jan/27-232429.html>).)

Rice said that, if the international community stands firm and has a

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Civil Liberties Key Component of Rule of Law . . .

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speech and new cases continue to define the scope of the First Amendment even today, citizens and the U.S. legal system recognize the value of freedom of speech to society, and consider the limitation of those rights carefully and deliberately.

OTHER CIVIL LIBERTIES

The Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth amendments collectively provide in all cases, that persons who are denied life, liberty or property are entitled to fair legal proceedings to determine if they justly were denied these rights. The overarching theme of these amendments, enumerated in the Fifth Amendment, is a guarantee of "due process of law". This means that the U.S. government, cannot jail someone, or take away his or her property or liberty without a fair legal hearing.

Anyone accused of a crime is guaranteed a fair and speedy trial, a defense lawyer, the right not to be tried twice for the same crime

(known as "double jeopardy"), the right to a trial by jury and the right not to be subjected to "cruel and unusual punishment" for crimes committed. All people are protected from "unreasonable searches or seizures," meaning that that agents of the government cannot enter a person's home unless the government obtains a warrant from the courts to do so.

The Ninth Amendment to the Constitution provides that even though several rights are listed specifically in the Bill of Rights, it is not an exclusive list – citizens may possess other rights even though those rights are not written specifically in the Constitution.

The 10th Amendment reserves to state governments any powers not assigned to the U.S. federal government in the Constitution. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/democracy/dmpaper4.htm>).)

In summary, although there is no specific formula for attaining rule of law, guaranteed civil liberties,

along with the tenets that the government is bound by the law and that all citizens are entitled to equal protection under the law, form its foundation in the United States. In the United States, government, lawmakers, and courts, more than 200 years later, continue to be guided by the principles developed by the founding fathers in the U.S. Constitution and its amendments.

For additional information, see "Equal Protection Essential Component of Rule of Law" (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/Archive/2006/Jan/23-895415.html>) and "The Rule of Law Provides Foundation for Democracy" (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/Archive/2006/Jan/19-995963.html>)."

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Bush Urges Hamas To Renounce Threats to Israel . . .

(Continued from page 16)

coherent approach to the situation, Iran's march toward a nuclear weapon can be arrested because Iran has much to lose from isolation from the international community.

In January, Iran broke U.N. seals at a uranium enrichment plant and said it would resume nuclear fuel research. The international community is concerned the fuel re-

search could produce weapons grade material for a nuclear weapon.

For additional information on U.S. policies in the region, see Middle East and North Africa (<http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/>).

A transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/01/20060130.html>) of the president's remarks is avail-

able on the White House Web site.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

United States Not Trying To Shrink U.N., State's Lagon Says



Mark Lagon

Washington -- The United States is not trying to rein in the United Nations by advocating reform of the world body, says the State Department's deputy assistant secretary for international organization affairs.

Instead, Mark Lagon says, the United States wants to see U.N. resources applied effectively to the matters of highest priority. The goal is not to cut U.N. programs but to shift existing resources from the least to the most important programs, he told a group of private and public sector development experts at a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Washington roundtable January 26.

Although some critics focus on the failings of the United Nations, Lagon said it should be given credit because it has done important work related to the promotion of democracy. He particularly singled out its electoral assistance efforts in places such as Iraq.

Lagon, who was part of a panel discussion entitled "Democracy, Human Rights and U.N. Reform," also said that the proposed U.N. Human Rights Council should focus on field operations and help governments by providing technical assistance. Asked about a timetable for the emergence of the council, which was conceived as a replacement body for the Commission on Human Rights, Lagon said it is "quite likely," but not certain

that it will come into being in 2006.

What is important, he said, is that the council should be an improvement on the existing commission. The United States is not fixated on artificial deadlines for the birth of the new council, but is focused instead on how to "get it right," he added. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/Archive/2005/Nov/20-818998.html>).)

Lagon also said the United States is pleased that the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDF) now exists. He said the UNDF's first board meeting will occur within weeks and that it already has a substantial number of partners. The fund, first proposed by President Bush in 2004, is supported by voluntary donations from U.N. member countries and lends support to emerging democracies.

Lagon spoke alongside Magdy Martinez-Soliman of the UNDP's Democratic Governance Division, who said the United Nations has to reform now because of too many perceptions in various parts of the world that the organization is expensive, clannish and vulnerable to mismanagement. Reform, he said, means accomplishing more with less by streamlining operations and becoming more efficient and accountable. And, the panelist said, the United States has a positive leadership role in the movement to reform the United Nations.

Martinez-Soliman also said the United Nations has been seen as timid in confronting human rights violations and needs to change its human rights machinery so it can

assess problems better. He predicted more humanitarian interventions in the future.

Jennifer Windsor, executive director of Freedom House, a non-profit, nonpartisan organization that works on the spread of freedom worldwide, also spoke and praised Lagon for his efforts to reach out the community of non-governmental organizations. Preserving and strengthening the role of international NGOs is critical in supporting both democracy and human rights, she said.

Windsor said NGOs could be used to monitor activities in fledgling democracies and predicted that NGO influence will continue to grow. When asked about countries that might seek to interfere in a neighbor's attempt to build a democracy, she said it is important not to let the strong kick the weak.

The panelist also said that all democracies constantly should strive to improve their record of achievement especially in relation to minority or ethnic populations.

For additional information, see International Security (<http://usinfo.state.gov/is/>) and U.S. and United Nations Reform (http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/UNGA_2005.html).

For more information about rule of law and human rights, see Democracy (<http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/democracy.html>).

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U. S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

Davos Meeting Pushes WTO Talks Toward Progress Across the Board

By Andrzej Zwanecki
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- An informal meeting of trade, economic and commerce ministers from 18 countries and the European Union (EU) has created a sense that World Trade Organization (WTO) trade liberalization talks must advance in all areas for the negotiations to succeed, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Portman says.

The ministers meeting at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, set an April 30 deadline for agreement on modalities -- specific details and time frames -- for further WTO negotiations, officially known as the Doha Development Agenda and previously the Doha Development Round. The deadline needs to be formally approved by the broader WTO ministerial forum.

"You see people coming together this morning as we discuss to say this ought to be a single undertaking and we ought to work to bring all of these issues together including trade facilitation, development and rules into one package ... we need to do this simultaneously," he said.

The United States strongly supports all the liberalizing aspects of the talks, including the trade and industrial tariffs known as nonagri-

culture market access (NAMA) issues.

Portman spoke at a January 28 panel discussion that brought together WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy and officials from several other countries, after the informal meeting.



US Trade Representative Robert Portman speaks during a press conference after a informal meeting of around thirty Ministers responsible for World Trade Organization, WTO, issues meeting on the sidelines of the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum WEF in Davos, Switzerland, Saturday, Jan. 28, 2006. (AP Photo/Keystone, Laurent Gillieron)

Calling the Doha Round a "once in a generation" opportunity, Portman said that all nations have much to lose if the talks fail.

"If we keep that in mind I think we can work through some of these tough issues," he said

AGRICULTURE ISSUES REMAIN CONTENTIOUS

Despite a "new dynamic," which, according to several participants, emerged during the informal meet-

ing, progress in the long-stalled WTO negotiations is far from being assured as evinced by some of the exchanges between participants, particularly between EU trade commissioner Peter Mandelson and Brazil's minister of foreign relations Celso Amorim.

Amorim argued that the Doha Round, to be true to its name, needs to further development and that the best and fastest way for developing countries to advance is through liberalization of agricultural trade, a view supported by Portman. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/Archive/2005/Dec/20-896370.html>).)

Mandelson questioned, however, the central role of agriculture in development and said that an agriculture-based development model should not be imposed on all poor countries. He said that

only developed and large emerging economies such as Brazil are to gain from the elimination of agricultural tariffs while poor nations' economies will be "wiped out" by any agreement to that effect.

Brazil, which leads the Group of 20 (G20) developing countries with a particular interest in agriculture negotiations, has denied it is pursuing its self-interest and said that the G20 had worked out a common position with the much broader group of 90 developing

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U.S. Finalizing Wild Bird Surveillance Program, Officials Say

By Kathryn McConnell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States is making final details of a national bird surveillance and testing program that the administration hopes will help guard the country from the spread of a potential outbreak of highly-pathogenic -- or lethal -- bird flu, officials say.

The U.S. federal government is coordinating its efforts with Alaska, other states and Canada, over which wild -- or migratory birds -- from Asia and Russia fly during spring season to their final destinations in Central and South America, said Ron DeHaven, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The program is a follow-up to the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/pandemic-influenza.html>), announced in November 2005 by President Bush. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Nov/01-163590.html>)).

DeHaven, together with Dale Hall and Susan Haseltine of the Department of Interior's U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), on January 27 briefed congressional staff and the media in Washington.

As part of the program, the United States will increase the number of bird surveillance stations along the Alaska and Pacific "flyways," coordinating with local "flyway councils," to determine if any birds exhibit symptoms of bird flu, also known as avian influenza, Hall said.

Flyway councils help local and state wildlife agencies coordinate efforts to protect and conserve migratory birds.

The Alaska flyway connects North America with Russia via airspace over the Bering Strait. The Pacific flyway runs along the west coast of the United States.

Wild migratory birds are suspect of being one way that the highly pathogenic H5N1 bird flu strain is transmitted. There is some evidence that such birds helped transmit the disease from East and Central Asia to Turkey, where it has spread from birds to humans, DeHaven said.

Turkish health officials so far positively have identified 21 human cases of infection from the H5N1 strain, with four fatalities. Tests have not been reaffirmed officially by an outside laboratory. But international health officials have expressed confidence in results previously presented by Turkish labs.

Worldwide, more than 150 human cases have occurred with 83 deaths. More than 150 million birds have died from the disease or in culling operations.

The United States also is stepping up its testing of commercial poultry for avian influenza before or at slaughter. Samples, which will total hundreds of thousands a year, according to DeHaven, will be sent to Interior's National Wildlife Health Center in Wisconsin. From there suspect samples will be sent for further testing to USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Iowa, Haseltine said.

Commercial poultry producers already are involved in testing, DeHaven said, citing a "tremendous surveillance program" established by the National Chicken Council, a poultry producer group.

Under the coordinated plan, hunters also voluntarily will submit to field surveillance stations samples of wild birds they kill, DeHaven said.

The key will be the quick submission of samples to the testing laboratory and "immediate assessment" of samples, Hill said.

When made final -- expected to be some time in late February -- details of the surveillance and testing program will be posted on USDA (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?navid=AVIAN_INFLUENZA&navtype=SU), USGS (http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/research/avian_influenza/FAQ_avian_influenza.html) and Department of Health and Human Services (<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>) Web sites, Haseltine said.

Additionally, the United States will increase its efforts to intercept potentially infected wild or domesticated birds being smuggled into the country, he said.

For more information, see Bird Flu (Avian Influenza) (http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/bird_flu.html).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>) ♦

NASA Scientists Say 2005 Was the Warmest Year in a Century

NASA scientists studying temperature data from around the world have found that 2005 may have been the warmest year in a century, according to a January 24 NASA press release.

Climatologists at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) in New York said the highest global annual average surface temperature in more than a century was recorded in their analysis for the 2005 calendar year.

"The five warmest years over the last century occurred in the last eight years," said James Hansen, director of NASA GISS.

Other research groups that study climate change rank 2005 as the second warmest year, based on comparisons through November.

The main difference among the analyses, the NASA scientists said, is the inclusion of the Arctic in the NASA analysis. Although there are few weather stations in the Arctic, the available data indicate that 2005 was unusually warm in Earth's northernmost region.

To figure out whether the Earth is cooling or warming, the scientists use temperature data from weather stations on land, satellite measurements of sea surface temperature since 1982 and data from ships for earlier years.

Previously, the warmest year of the century was 1998, when a strong El Niño – a warm water event in the eastern Pacific Ocean -- added warmth to global

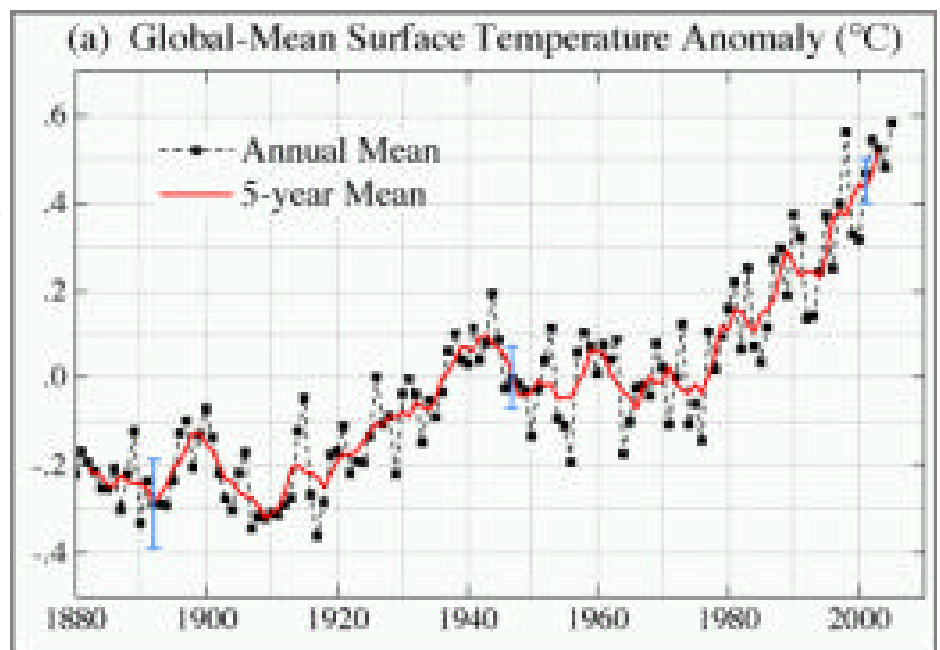
temperatures. Now, global warmth has returned to about the level of 1998 without the help of an El Niño.

The result indicates that a strong underlying warming trend is continuing. Global warming since the middle 1970s is now about 0.6 degrees Celsius, according to NASA. Total warming in the past century is about 0.8 degrees Celsius.

For more information, see Climate Change (http://usinfo.state.gov/global_issues/climate_change.html).

For more information about global temperature trends on the Web, visit: <http://data.giss.nasa.gov/gistemp/2005/>

Full text and graphics are available at <http://www.nasa.gov/>



Global annual surface temperature relative to 1951–1980 mean based on surface air measurements at meteorological stations and ship and satellite measurements for sea surface temperature. Error bars are estimated 2s (95% confidence) uncertainty.

Additional information (<http://data.giss.nasa.gov/gistemp/2005/>) about global temperature trends and the full press release (http://www.nasa.gov/vision/earth/environment/2005_warmest.html) text and graphics are available on NASA's Web site.

[vision/earth/environment/2005_warmest.html](http://www.nasa.gov/vision/earth/environment/2005_warmest.html)

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International Astronomers Find Distant, Icy Earth-Like Planet

Using a network of telescopes scattered across the globe and a relatively new planet-hunting technique, international researchers have discovered a potentially rocky, icy body that may be the smallest planet yet found orbiting a star outside the solar system.

Located more than 20,000 light years away in the constellation Sagittarius, close to the center of the Milky Way galaxy, planet OGLE-2005-BLG-390Lb is about 5.5 times the mass of Earth and its surface temperature is minus 220 degrees Celsius.

The extrasolar (outside the solar system) planet is more Earth-like than any other planet found so far. It circles its parent star every 10 years.

The discovery is the joint effort of three independent microlensing campaigns -- Probing Lensing Anomalies NETwork (PLANET)/RoboNet, the Optical Gravitational Lensing Experiment, and Microlensing Observations in Astrophysics.

The project involves 73 collaborators affiliated with 32 institutions in 12 countries -- Austria, Australia, Chile, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States.

According to a January 25 U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) press release, the discovery suggests the technique, called gravitational microlensing, may be an exceptional technology for finding

distant planets with traits that could support life.

"This is an important breakthrough in the quest to answer the question 'Are we alone?'" said Michael Turner, assistant director for the NSF mathematical and physical sciences directorate.

"The team has discovered the most Earth-like planet yet," he added, "and, more importantly,

like a lens and magnifies the incoming light.

Telescopes cannot resolve the details of the magnified image but they do notice a peak in light intensity, and when a planet is present around the closer star, the planet's gravity adds a small peak of its own.

Astronomers can use those features to determine how large the planet is and how far away it is from its star.

Researchers believe gravitational microlensing will bring opportunities for observing other rocky planets in the "habitable zones" of stars -- regions where temperatures are perfect for maintaining liquid water and spawning life.

"That fact that we stumbled on one means there are thousands of them out there," said

PLANET member Kem Cook, an astronomer at the U.S. Department of Energy's Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

Animations and additional information are available on the NSF (http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=105759&org=NSF&from=news) Web site.

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European Southern Observatory artist's rendition of the newly discovered extrasolar planet
Credit: European Southern Observatory

has demonstrated the power of a new technique that is sensitive to detecting habitable planets."

Gravitational microlensing is based on a concept first discussed by Albert Einstein in the early 20th century. The discovery opens a new chapter in the search for planets that support life.

When astronomers observe a star, the light waves generally travel straight from the star to the telescope. But if another star passes directly in between, even if great distances separate the two, the gravity of the nearer object acts

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Bush, Rice Say Palestinian Elections Show "Power of Democracy" . . .

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community to "speak clearly and truly" to the principles of democracy, which she said is incompatible with terrorism and wanton violence. "[D]emocracy brings not just rights, but it brings obligations and responsibilities, too," she said.

Rice said she spoke to President Abbas, as well as U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, and others to "share views on the way forward." She also said that a meeting of the Quartet (the United Nations, Russia, the European Union and the United States) will be held soon to discuss the Middle East road map for peace.

Rice's statement (<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/59870.htm>) on the Palestinian elections is

available on the State Department Web site. A transcript (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/01/20060126.html>) of the Bush press conference is available on the White House Web site.

For additional information on U.S. policy, see The Middle East: A Vision for the Future (http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/me_vision.html).

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Davos Meeting Pushes WTO Talks Toward Progress Across the Board . . .

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countries during the December 2005 WTO ministerial meeting in Hong Kong, according to press reports.

Mandelson also suggested that a slower, more gradual approach to farm trade liberalization might work better, noting that it took several decades for industrial tariffs to be reduced significantly.

This suggestion was, however, rejected by Amorim who said that a delay in farm trade liberalization would hamper the economic advance of developing countries.

A day earlier Mandelson said that the "alliance between the United States and Brazil [on agriculture]

has led to stalemate in these [WTO] talks."

Portman said that the Bush administration indeed believes that agriculture is essential for the Doha Round to "come together" because of the central role it plays in development and other factors. And that is why it has made a bold proposal to eliminate trade-distorting farm subsidies.

Earlier, Portman criticized the EU for refusing to improve its latest agricultural offer, which he said would result in little or no real increase in market access.

But he added that the United States has never focused on agricultural issues solely.

Lamy said that tough negotiations are still ahead and that support from governments' domestic constituencies will be crucial for any progress in the Doha Round. Nevertheless, he said he gained a sense in Davos that the picture of the "end game" starts to appear in minds of WTO stakeholders.

For additional information, see USA and the WTO (http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/WTO.html).

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